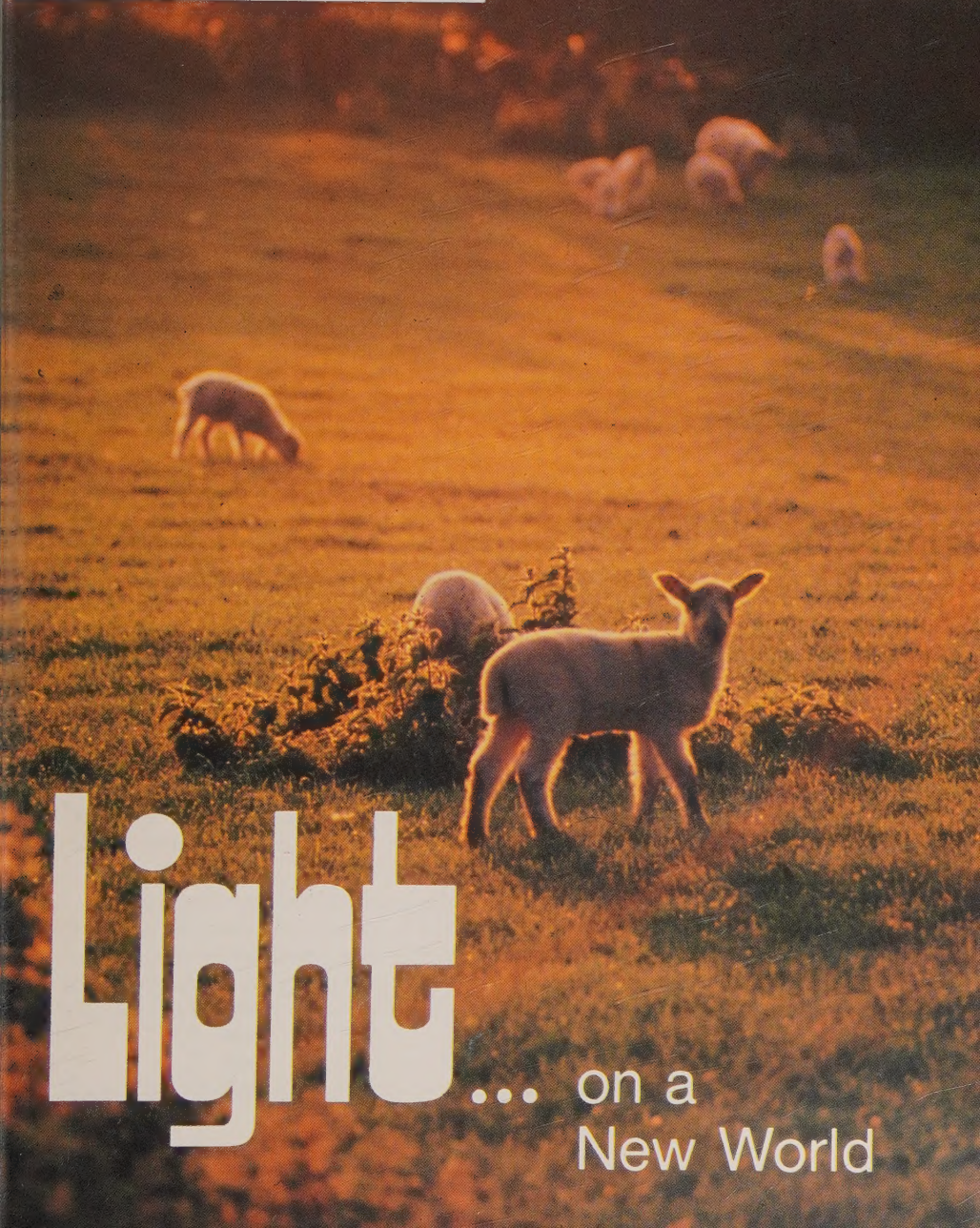


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# The gospel taught by Jesus

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THE WORD GOSPEL means good news and is used to describe the teaching of Jesus with regard to the future kingdom of God. This message was given to the Jews during Jesus' ministry and was in fulfilment of Old Testament scripture as it offered to them the possibility of reconciliation with their God and the hope of eternal life in the kingdom to come. The theme of the gospel message runs throughout the four New Testament records of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and also continues in the book of Acts and the epistles.

## THE TEACHING OF JESUS

The first mention we have in the Bible of Christ's commitment to the gospel is in Luke 2 v 49.<sup>1</sup> Here Mary and Joseph find the 12 year old boy Jesus, in the temple at Jerusalem, engaged in conversation with the teachers of the Law of Moses. When his parents saw him they were astonished and on questioning Jesus he replied, '*wist ye not that I must be about my Fathers business?*' So we see from this that Jesus was already aware of the role he must play in making known to the Jewish people God's plan and purpose.

We also find in Luke's record the understanding that Christ had of the place the gospel message held in the Old Testament, and how he was to fulfil the scripture. He read from the book of Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth, his home town, and after finishing the passage he told his hearers that they were seeing scripture fulfilled before their very eyes.<sup>2</sup>

The gospel was often proclaimed by Jesus in the words '*the kingdom of God is at hand*', or more correctly translated **has approached**. This was because he knew that he, being an integral part of God's plan, brought closer to the Jews the hope of inheriting a place in the kingdom to be established and also that through his work the plan for the kingdom would be accomplished.

<sup>1</sup>Luke 2.49    <sup>2</sup>Luke 4.18-21

Jesus taught the people as he travelled around the land of Israel and some followed him for several days to hear the wonderful words he spoke. His method of teaching was most commonly to disguise the message in the form of parables, as these made it easier for the unlearned to understand. At the same time the parables hid the real truth from the Scribes and the Pharisees whose blinkered attitude often prevented them from seeing the true meaning and accepting it.

An example of this is the parable of the wedding feast when the invited guests (the Jews) refused to attend the celebration and as a result the guests were made up of those who were destitute and beggars (the Gentiles).<sup>3</sup> Another example used to describe the kingdom of God outlines the parable of the mustard seed, which although the smallest seed used by farmers, could grow to become a tree; showing that the beginning may seem insignificant but that the spread of the kingdom will eventually become world-wide.<sup>4</sup>

### THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE

An important aspect of the gospel message of the kingdom was that it was accompanied by the need for repentance on the part of the hearer, as this was necessary to gain an inheritance in the future glory. This particularly applied to those Jews who had turned away from God but also to the Scribes and Pharisees who were steeped in the observance of the Law of Moses and refused to accept Jesus as their Messiah.

Whilst preaching, Jesus also performed many miracles amongst those who came to hear him, such as raising the dead and healing diseases. These miracles were not intended to detract from the importance of the gospel message but rather to give authority to his teaching and also served to spread the message further abroad.

When Jesus was crucified by the very people he had been trying to convert, his work as a teacher of the good news was completed and he gave the responsibility for continuing his work to his apostles, prior to his ascension.

### THE APOSTLES

The word 'Apostle' comes from the root Greek word '**Apostolos**' which is literally translated as 'one sent forth'. If we apply this understanding of the word to the Apostles of Christ, we can see immediately the significance of the name (Apostle of Christ — One sent forth of Christ). We get an immediate impression then, just from the name, that the apostles were to continue the preaching of the gospel message, with Christ's authority.

The apostles were made up of the 11 remaining close disciples of Christ, Judas having committed suicide on realising the magnitude of his crime, plus Matthias who

<sup>3</sup>Matthew 22.1-14    <sup>4</sup>Matthew 13.31,32



had been selected by the casting of lots by the remaining 11. These men had accompanied Jesus on his journeys throughout Israel and had themselves answered the call of the gospel.<sup>5</sup> They had, over the three years of Jesus' ministry, learnt directly from his public and private teaching the gospel truth, and at one point had even been sent out in twos to spread the word.<sup>6</sup>

They were commanded by Jesus before he ascended to heaven to preach the good news 'to all creation'.<sup>7</sup> Naturally, their teaching was the same as that of their Master, except that they were able to include the death and resurrection of Christ as proof of God's intention that man should be fully reconciled with Him.

Again the message was prefaced by the call to repentance but added to this was the need to be baptised into the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin.<sup>8</sup>

Initially the preaching was done in Jerusalem after the apostles had received the Holy Spirit power from God.<sup>9</sup> This enabled them to converse with men and women from many other countries in their own language. They were therefore able to hear the gospel and on return to their homes tell others of what they had seen and heard. The apostles also used the power of the Holy Spirit to perform miracles just as Jesus had done and these acts were further evidence of the divine truth of their preaching.

After some time several of the apostles began to travel to surrounding countries to continue the work of spreading the gospel and also to support and encourage the groups of believers who had been converted, who were for the most part, Jews. These groups of people eventually became known as Christians and were often subjected to intense persecution by the Jewish authorities who wanted to try and eradicate both them and their teaching.

This led to the death of more than one of the disciples, and perhaps the most notable was that of Stephen. This man, for the sake of the gospel, confronted the Jewish leaders and answered their accusations of blasphemy with a history of the Jews and how they had over the centuries denied God and even crucified His only begotten son. This caused such intense outrage that they stoned Stephen to death. Yet, his faith in the promises of the gospel was such that he was able to ask God to forgive his persecutors and to die in the certain hope of resurrection and eternal life when Jesus returns.

Following Stephen's death the Jewish authorities were determined to rid Jerusalem of the heretics (so called) and this led to many believers fleeing to other areas. A certain man by the name of Saul requested permission from the elders of the synagogue to travel to Damascus and hunt down any of the followers of Christ so he could bring them back to Jerusalem for trial.

<sup>5</sup>Acts 1.22-26 <sup>6</sup>Luke 10.1 <sup>7</sup>Mark 16.15 (N.I.V.) <sup>8</sup>Acts 2.38 <sup>9</sup>Acts 2.41-47

## PERSECUTION

It would be easy to misunderstand the persecution of these early followers of Christ both at the hands of Saul and other antagonists. It could be construed as a sign that God was not really behind the activities of the apostles and hence not protecting them. It is important though to look at the issue from a wider perspective and decide what was the effect of the persecution. Firstly, the persecution confirmed the words of Christ which he spoke, as recorded by John<sup>10</sup> concerning the antagonism against himself, the gospel and its followers. Secondly, it had the effect of scattering those who had heard the gospel message further abroad than they would have perhaps ventured voluntarily. This provided the means by which the gospel could be spread rapidly around the world, in that those fleeing further afield would come into contact with a wider circle of people, among whom they would find some receptive ears to the good news message.

Whilst on his journey Saul, then an ardent persecutor of Christ's followers, experienced a vision from Jesus which caused him to have a complete change of purpose and become converted himself. As a result of this momentous event in his life Saul (or Paul as he was later known) became a dedicated teacher of the gospel and above all else, he was instrumental in bringing the gospel message to the Gentiles (non Jews) for the first time. This also meant that many more people, of differing nationalities, were converted than would have been without this chosen man's work. Paul spent his whole life after his conversion, travelling great distances to preach the word of God and encourage those who accepted the good news.

## THE GOSPEL CORRUPTED

As the spread of the gospel advanced so did the numbers of ecclesias and these First Century Christians were, with God's protection able to preserve the gospel as given by Jesus Christ. As is always the case with any 'organisation' that grows larger, problems were to arise. The problems took the form of wrong teaching and immoral behaviour, things which were certainly not taught or condoned by Christ.

So when we read the New Testament epistles from people such as Paul, Peter and James we see another facet of the gospel message being underlined. That facet being the need to maintain the purity, the simplicity and the original truth of the message given by Christ and to conduct a life which would not bring the gospel message and the way of truth into disrepute.

Some of the more influential (but misguided) men in the early church felt it necessary to introduce other ideas and teachings and indeed some of these errors have been perpetuated by the established church to this day. Such teachings included the fallacy of heaven going at death, perhaps one of the worst of all erroneous teaching, especially when coupled with the idea of death-bed confession and repentance.

<sup>10</sup>John 16.1-4



With such perverse teachings both old and modern day religious '**leaders**' have denied again the simple truth of Christ's teaching; that he will return to the earth from heaven as promised to reward his true consistent followers with a place in his kingdom for ever on earth.

Today, we find men seeking their own glorification rather than God's. We see now that most of the world regards this great gospel message of Christ an object of ridicule. Nevertheless, we understand that Christ's message remains sure and that the apostles held the same basic, pure belief.

This is what Peter and James had to say:

PETER

'This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in [both] which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of creation . . . But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'<sup>11</sup>

JAMES

'Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.'<sup>12</sup>

The gospel remains the same today as it was then and its simplicity and strength is still able to convert those willing to examine it.

P Meadows  
Birmingham

<sup>11</sup>II Peter 3.1-4, 8-9    <sup>12</sup>James 5.7,8

## A CURIOUS FACT

The first article which you have just read sets out clearly how Jesus went about the land of Palestine preaching the GOSPEL or the GOOD NEWS of the Kingdom of God. Later on the Apostles were to go further afield throughout Asia Minor, preaching the same Gospel and urging their hearers to be obedient to the call of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

It is a curious fact, however, that all four Gospel records have very little to say ABOUT the Kingdom of God. That it would be beneficial to the believers, there can be no doubt. The call to repentance was real and earnest and it is clear that the Kingdom of God is the reward for righteousness and faith in the promises of God. Why this apparent omission? Why do we not have a detailed description OF the Kingdom in the Gospel records?

There is, in fact, a simple answer. Those to whom Jesus preached were the *'lost sheep of the house of Israel'*.<sup>1</sup> They were already the recipients of great and precious promises<sup>2</sup> and those who were faithful, were looking for the Kingdom of God to be established in their own days. One such was a man called Simeon, who as Luke records:

'... was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.'<sup>3</sup>

Simeon and many others like him knew very well what the Kingdom of God would be like, because he was familiar with the Scriptures and particularly the writings of the prophets of Israel. They knew how great the Kingdom had been in the past and looked forward to its reinstatement under a new king, coming in the line of David. This kingdom would be the fulfilment of the promises made to their fathers. WE INVITE YOU TO READ ON.

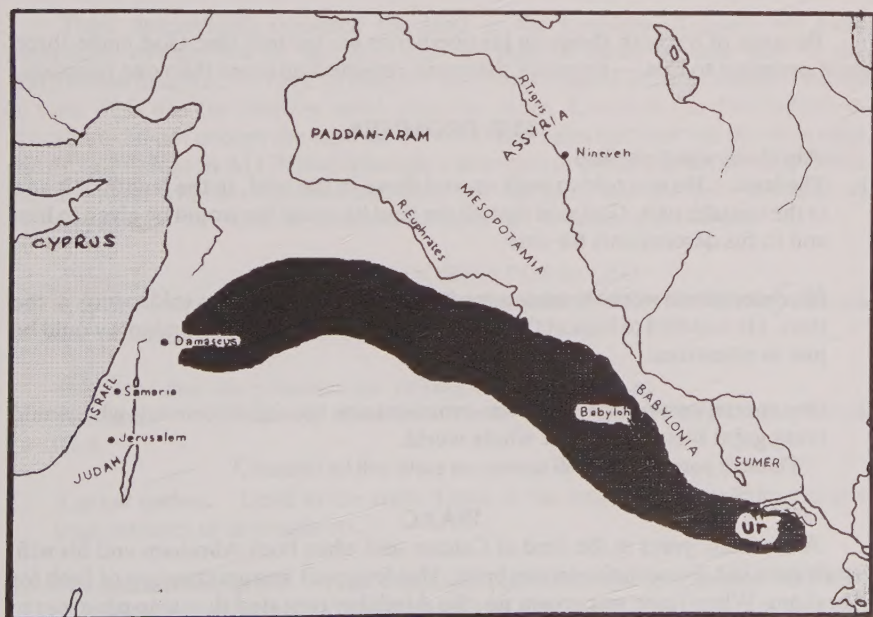
<sup>1</sup>Matthew 15.24    <sup>2</sup>Romans 9.4,5    <sup>3</sup>Luke 2.25



# The gospel and Abraham

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IN THE FIRST half of this century a great deal of work was done by archaeologists in a place called Ur on the river Euphrates near the Persian Gulf. That part of the world is known as the Cradle of Civilisation and Ur was one of the most important cities in the ancient kingdom of Sumer and later of Chaldea. The map shows the site of Ur.



In spite of the fact that Ur was at the height of its importance centuries before Christ, it had all the marks of a modern civilised city. Ur had its libraries and banks, its shops and offices and markets. Libraries of clay tablets have been excavated and

among the artifacts discovered have been employment contracts and hire purchase agreements. All the trappings of modern civilisation could be found at Ur — except the internal combustion engine, and in those days perhaps that was no great disadvantage!

### ABRAHAM

A member of one of the wealthy families of the time was a man called Abraham. What marked him out from his contemporaries was his rejection of the moon worship for which Ur was known and his belief in a supreme Creator, in whom he came to put his trust and his faith. The Old Testament tells us that God called Abraham out from Ur. God told him to leave his home with all its comforts and to travel to another land that God would show him.

The Bible does not tell us how the message came to Abraham but it does tell us that **he believed God and obeyed him.**

The book of Genesis tells us that Abraham with his family, his flocks and his herds travelled round the fertile crescent down to the north of what is now Israel and into what was then the land of Canaan.

Because of his faith shown in his obedience we are told that God made three great promises to him — promises that were repeated on more than one occasion.

### THE PROMISES

Abraham was promised:

1. **The land.** He was told to walk up and down in the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it. God said that all the land he could see would be given to him and to his descendants **for ever.**
2. **His descendants would become a great nation.** Abraham was told to look at the stars. He was told to look at the sand. He was told that his descendants would be just as numerous.
3. **One special descendant.** He was promised one special descendant who would bring great blessings on the whole world.

‘Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed’.<sup>1</sup>

### ISAAC

After many years in the land of Canaan and when both Abraham and his wife Sarah were old, Isaac their son was born. This long wait was another test of faith for Abraham. When Isaac was grown up, the Almighty repeated the same promises to him.

<sup>1</sup>Genesis 22.18 (N.I.V.)



1. 'Stay in this land . . . to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham.'<sup>2</sup>
2. 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky'.<sup>3</sup>
3. 'Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws.'<sup>4</sup>

### JACOB

In due course, Jacob was born to Isaac and his wife Rebekah and *Genesis 28* tells us how the same promises were repeated to him.

1. 'I will give you . . . the land.'
2. 'Your descendants will be like the dust.'
3. 'All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.'<sup>5</sup>

These promises must be very important to be repeated again and again. They are referred to in the Psalms and details about their fulfilment are given in a number of places in the books of the Old Testament prophets.

Abraham died. Isaac died. Jacob died.

Their descendants occupied the land as the kingdom of Israel but were eventually overthrown by Babylon and the land of Israel became part of the Babylonian Empire; the Persian Empire, the Greek Empire and the Roman Empire in turn. This was the position when Jesus was born. Certainly the descendants of Abraham did not occupy the land **for ever**. For centuries the land was desolate after the dreadful siege in AD 70 and although a new state of Israel was declared in 1948 it has not been without repeated problems and certainly has not been a source of blessing for the surrounding nations, let alone '*all families of the earth*'.

### ABRAHAM LOOKED FORWARD

It is when we look at the teaching of Jesus and the apostles that the importance of these promises becomes clear.

It is clear that the promises are talking about real things:

1. **The land.** '*Walk up and down in the land*' Abraham was told. It was a real land.
2. **A great nation.** Look at the stars. Look at the dust. We are talking about a huge number of descendants.
3. **The special descendant.** Paul wrote to Christians in the first century and said, '*The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not*

<sup>2</sup>*Genesis 26.3 (N.I.V.)*   <sup>3</sup>*Genesis 26.4 (N.I.V.)*   <sup>4</sup>*Genesis 26.4,5 (N.I.V.)*

<sup>5</sup>*Genesis 28.13,14 (N.I.V.)*

say "and to seeds", meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ."<sup>6</sup>

Here, then, is the importance of the promises. Jesus was to be the one special descendant among all the descendants of Abraham, through whom all the problems of the world would be put right. He was to be the one through whom we might share in these blessings.

Abraham understood that the promises looked a long way into the future but he had no doubts about their ultimate fulfilment. Jesus said that, '*Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day.*'<sup>7</sup> In other words, Abraham recognised that the way God was to bring salvation to the world was through Jesus and he looked forward to that time.

This is why in the same letter to the Galatians, Paul says that this great message of hope for the world was the Gospel — preached to Abraham.

'Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you".'<sup>8</sup>

### FUTURE FULFILMENT

Abraham recognised that the fulfilment of these promises was a long way into the future. They all died in this hope.

'All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance.'<sup>9</sup>

This is not something we should be sad about.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews lists a great line of people who had the same faith as Abraham; who believed the same things; who looked forward to the future fulfilment of God's promises when Jesus returns to the earth. Then he wrote,

'These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.'<sup>10</sup>

Paul explains how this is possible.

### FIRST FAITH

Just after his statement in his letter to the Galatians, that these promises are really the foundations of the Gospel (the Good News), he says that we can share in the blessings if we also share Abraham's faith.

<sup>6</sup>Galatians 3.16 (N.I.V.)    <sup>7</sup>John 8.56 (N.I.V.)    <sup>8</sup>Galatians 3.6-8 (N.I.V.)

<sup>9</sup>Hebrews 11.13 (N.I.V.)    <sup>10</sup>Hebrews 11.39,40 (N.I.V.)



‘God . . . announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you”.

So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.’<sup>11</sup>

So, just as Abraham did, we have to believe God. This is what faith is all about.

‘Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.’<sup>12</sup>

### THEN OBEDIENCE

Abraham showed his faith by doing what God commanded. We, too, must be prepared to try to live our lives in ways that will please God. This means being willing to be baptised.

The New Testament makes it clear that baptism was the way that Christians associated themselves with the death and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>13</sup> This immersion in water marked a new start to their lives in the faith of the Gospel. Paul explains that baptism, because of its associations related the believer to the promises to Abraham.

‘You are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.’<sup>14</sup>

This is why Abraham is mentioned so many times in the teaching of Jesus and the apostles. Abraham was a tremendous example of faith. Abraham was an example of one who put his faith into practice.

If we copy that example and do the same, then we can share in the same hope of the Gospel and be sure of a place in God’s kingdom — with Abraham — when Jesus returns.

‘. . . when shall they see Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God . . .’<sup>15</sup>

Michael Walker  
Dartford

<sup>11</sup>*Galatians 3.7-9 (N.I.V.)*   <sup>12</sup>*Hebrews 11.6 (N.I.V.)*   <sup>13</sup>*Read Romans 6*   <sup>14</sup>*Galatians 3.26-29 (N.I.V.)*   <sup>15</sup>*Luke 13.28*

# Good news for a change

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WE HAVE SEEN in the earlier articles that at the centre of the teaching of Jesus and the apostles was the coming of the kingdom of God. In fact, it was part of the Lord's prayer in the words '*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*'<sup>1</sup> This clearly states that the object of the kingdom is to establish God's will upon this earth.

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul in writing to the Galatians stated that the gospel of good news of God's coming kingdom was preached to Abraham, that '*In thee shall all nations be blessed.*'<sup>2</sup> Here again, the kingdom clearly involves all nations of the earth. The gospel, therefore, is concerned with this earth and the kingdom promised to be established thereon is God's kingdom, due to be ruled over by His son the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are references in the New Testament, particularly in the parables of Jesus, that speak of the kingdom of heaven. This does not mean that the kingdom will be in heaven but it is so described because God is the architect of it and dwells in heaven. There are too many references to a literal kingdom on earth to sensibly come to any other conclusion and in the gospel records the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are interchangeable terms. Abraham was not promised a place in heaven but rather the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.<sup>3</sup>

David was promised to see his son (Jesus Christ) sit on his throne in Jerusalem (not in heaven) before him.<sup>4</sup> Mary the mother of Jesus was told that Jesus would be given the throne of his father David and that throne was in Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup> Jesus himself said, when on earth, he would come again in power and great glory<sup>6</sup> and the disciples were told by angels that Jesus would come again to the earth in the same dramatic manner in which he departed from them.<sup>7</sup>

All this evidence points to the kingdom of God being a literal kingdom on the earth to be established at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup>Matthew 6.10   <sup>2</sup>Galatians 3.8   <sup>3</sup>Genesis 17.8   <sup>4</sup>2 Samuel 7.16   <sup>5</sup>Luke 1.32,33   <sup>6</sup>Luke 21.27  
<sup>7</sup>Acts 1.11



Many of the prophets of Israel gave word pictures of this kingdom and the conditions that will exist on the earth at that time. For example, there will at last be peace throughout the earth, in fact, weapons of war will be converted to agricultural instruments and the science of war will no longer be taught or learnt.<sup>8</sup>

### THE END OF FAMINE AND HUNGER

Just think of what this means. For thousands of years men have striven for lasting peace but have not achieved it. Now at last it becomes a fact and all the horror of war and bloodshed will gradually die in the minds of mankind. The armed forces of the world will become redundant, the colleges that teach war will be closed and the armament manufacturers will be out of business unless they turn to manufacturing agricultural implements. The emphasis of the new world economy will be agriculture and with the blessing of God upon the earth, the land will yield plentifully. So much so that we are told by the prophet Amos that *'the plowman shall overtake the reaper.'*<sup>9</sup>

In other words, so great will be the harvests that they will still be gathering in when it is time to plough and plant again. Famines will have gone for ever and the land will yield bumper harvests. Even the seven million square miles of desert in the world will be transformed into fruitfield fields.<sup>10</sup> This is equivalent to extending the productive surface of the world 80 times the area of Great Britain. The simple answer being a perfect distribution of rainwater by a Creator who controls the elements.

The prophet Isaiah says,

*'... in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert'*

so that,

*'the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.'*<sup>11</sup>

All this is but a part of the remarkable changes promised by God in His word the Bible when His kingdom is set up on earth at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### A KINGDOM OF PEACE

The consequence of lasting piece and plenty in the earth will be quietness and security for all mankind.

The prophet Micah says:

*'But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid.'*<sup>12</sup>

There will be no need for police forces, security guards, prisons, detention centres and even locks on doors and windows will be quite superfluous. The prophet Isaiah says *'a king shall reign in righteousness'* and *'the work of righteousness shall be*

<sup>8</sup>Isaiah 2.4    <sup>9</sup>Amos 9.13    <sup>10</sup>Isaiah 35.1    <sup>11</sup>Isaiah 35.6    <sup>12</sup>Micah 4.4

peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.<sup>13</sup> No longer will the voice of birds be drowned by the intrusion of man-made noise and pollution. At last there will be peace in the earth. — Peace of mind for all mankind.

Have you ever longed for just a short period of peace and quietness and then thought of what effort would be involved to acquire it? Well, wait a little while and the kingdom of God will bring a peace to this troubled earth such as it has never known nor could imagine.

But what of the implacable enemies of mankind, disease, suffering and death? Man has done his best to relieve this problem and Medical Science has conquered many killer diseases but the average expectation of life is still little more than 70 years. However, the prophet Isaiah has said that in the kingdom of God one who dies at the age of 100 will still be regarded as a child.<sup>14</sup> The consequence of peace, quietness and plenty for all will be a much longer life in happiness and contentment. But that is not all, for miracles will be performed to heal the blind, deaf, lame and dumb just as they were during the days of Jesus Christ's ministry on earth nearly 2000 years ago.<sup>15</sup>

The Bible tells of the multitudes who brought their sick and diseased to be healed by Jesus and they thronged him to touch but the hem of his garment and as many as touched were healed.<sup>16</sup> Jesus the great Prince of Peace and Righteousness was giving a foretaste of the coming kingdom of God on earth. These same miraculous powers were passed on to Jesus' disciples and it is recorded that the Apostles Peter and Paul performed great miracles by word and even by the shadow of them falling on the sick. The prophet Isaiah says that in the kingdom of God the sick and diseased will be healed by miraculous powers.<sup>17</sup>

Think for a moment what this means. — It is good news of a mighty change that is coming in the conditions for the mortal inhabitants on this earth. No longer will we need the vast paraphernalia of the medical world the cost of which is almost impossible to calculate. No more drugs, hospitals, doctors, nurses and medical specialists of every kind. Instead, healing will be by word and touch and through the faith of the patient. All the resources of materials, manpower and energy of the medical world will be available for use in another direction for the benefit of mankind.

### A NEW WORLD GOVERNMENT

All these vast changes to come presuppose a wise and all powerful government of the world. This government will have its centre of power in Jerusalem, the city of the great king, which will be the capital city of the world and the great king is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Christ, the only man who through his death and resurrection has conquered sin and death. He is therefore rightfully the king of the coming kingdom of God on earth and the Psalmist says '*all kings shall fall down*

<sup>13</sup>Isaiah 32.1,17   <sup>14</sup>Isaiah 65.20   <sup>15</sup>Isaiah 35.5,6   <sup>16</sup>Mark 6.56   <sup>17</sup>Isaiah 35.5,6



before him; all nations shall serve him.<sup>18</sup> Jesus will be assisted in governing the world by all those who in their lifetime were faithful to him and though the majority have long remained in the grave they will be raised and given eternal life and places of authority in his kingdom. These immortal beings, imbued with divine wisdom, will teach the mortal inhabitants of the world, the ways of God and so control the vast order of the change until near perfection is achieved.

The Apostle Paul has written '*The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*', but this will take 1000 years at the end of which death will be removed from the earth completely.<sup>19</sup> In the meantime sin which caused death in the first place, and which arises from man's innate desire to disobey God, will be restrained and curtailed through the beneficent influence of Christ's government of the world and the perfect conditions of life which will ensue. A mighty temple will be erected in Jerusalem and all nations will come there to worship the Creator of heaven and earth and pay homage to His son the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>20</sup>

The confusion of languages which we have today will be replaced by one language throughout the world and there will only be one religion based solely on God's declared word in the Bible.<sup>21</sup>

As we have seen from the previous article, in time past God chose for Himself a man of great faith called Abraham, to be the father of the nation of Israel. God, for a time, was their king. The kingdom of Israel was therefore the kingdom of God in the past but due to their wickedness the kingdom was overthrown and the prophet Ezekiel promised that it would never have a king again until one came who had the right to it and God would then give him the kingdom.<sup>22</sup> That king is the Lord Jesus Christ who claimed to be a king in his trial before Pilate but he was rejected by his own people and crucified. God's promises are never broken and He had promised Mary the mother of Jesus that her son would sit on the throne of his father David and of his kingdom there would be no end.<sup>23</sup>

So Jesus was raised from the dead the third day to die no more and to await the time when God's promised kingdom would be established on the earth when he would sit on David's throne in Jerusalem. Although the Jewish people have rejected Jesus as their promised Messiah, at the time of the the end, his return to the earth and his deliverance of them from their enemies, will at last convince them. The prophet Zechariah says they will then mourn for what they did to him so many years ago.<sup>24</sup>

The Jewish people who have been despised, hated and persecuted for generations because they turned away from God and crucified His son will at last be honoured and respected throughout the world. In fact, they will become the premier people of the kingdom of God, the head of the nations and not the tail, and they will lead all nations in the worship of Him and His son.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Psalm 72.11    <sup>19</sup>I Corinthians 15.26    <sup>20</sup>Ezek. 40.43    <sup>21</sup>Zeph 3.9    <sup>22</sup>Ezek. 21.25-27

<sup>23</sup>Luke 1.32,33    <sup>24</sup>Zech 12.10    <sup>25</sup>Deut. 28.13/Zech. 8.22,23

It is difficult for us in this 20th Century of violence and war, noise and distress, disease and death to imagine how all these conditions can be changed to bring in a perfect world. But God has promised to do this through His son the Lord Jesus Christ and God's promises never fail.

The gospel, preached by Jesus and recorded in the Bible is the **good news** of an amazing change to take place in this world in the establishment of the kingdom of God. All the signs in the earth show that that day is very near when the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the earth, take unto himself his great power and reign as king of the world. Even the wild animals in that day will become tame and peace and happiness will fill the earth.<sup>26</sup>

If *you* want to enjoy the new age to come and to share rulership of the world with Christ, *now* is the time to read and understand God's word and to be obedient to His commandments. Only those who have entered into covenant relationship with God can look forward to eternal life in God's kingdom.

C Harris  
Purley

### **Good News for YOU — NOW!**

This edition of **LIGHT on a New World**, sets out clearly the reality of the Gospel message — the **GOOD NEWS** of the coming Kingdom of God. The whole world is going to benefit from the return of Christ to establish God's Kingdom — God's new world. That is good news, but there is even better news for you!

The Kingdom of God will be largely inhabited by a greatly blessed and privileged people. It will be governed under Christ's rulership by those who have committed themselves to Christ in this life and will be found worthy to receive the gift of God which is **ETERNAL LIFE**.

So Jesus said:

'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.'<sup>27</sup>

Jesus also told his disciples that their reward would be to rule over the nation of Israel, the centre of God's plan to rule the world in righteousness. The promise of eternal life is contained in the promise of Christ to all who are prepared to make sacrifices in this life:

'And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.'<sup>28</sup>

It is a great challenge to take up the cross to follow Christ, but the reward is infinitely greater, Are **YOU** up to the challenge?

<sup>26</sup>Isaiah 65.25   <sup>27</sup>John 17.3   <sup>28</sup>Matthew 19.29,30